COMMUNICATION.

FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.—No. I.

TREATY OF ALLIANCE.

A recent article in the *National Intelligencer*, written by an American in Paris, evidently emanating from an able and practised pen, contains statements and opinions touching an important period of our history which may justly claim further consideration. While the writer successfully combats certain errors, into which the distinguished historian of the *Girondists* had been led by a too easy faith or a too hasty research, he adopts others concerning the early political relations between France and the United States, more grave in their character and more extensive in their application.

Relying on authorities which he deems worthy of implicit confidence, this writer revives and gives a new currency to suspicions, long entertained, of the motives, good faith, and conduct of the French Government in its alliance with the United States, during their struggle for independence. I propose to examine the grounds of these suspicions, or rather of these charges; for they have, in fact, become positive charges of bad faith and sinister designs, in the manner they have been represented by a prominent class of American writers.

And here it may be stated, at the outset, that the question is not what motives France had for entering into a war with England, or for seizing the opportunity of the revolt of the American colonies to effect that measure. That France was influenced in taking this step by a love of republican institutions, or by the romantic disinterestedness of building up a new empire in a remote hemisphere simply *for its own sake*, cannot for a moment be supposed. Since the days of the Crusades, what nation has ever dreamed of so erratic an enterprise? It cannot be presumed, therefore, upon any principles of human nature or rational policy, that, in running the hazard and incurring the enormous expense of a war, France had any other ultimate aim than the promotion of her own interest. Hence the only question to be considered in the present case is, whether France was true to her engagements to the United States—whether she promptly, faithfully, and steadily fulfilled these engagements till American independence was secured.

The character of Count de Vergennes is involved in this question. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Cabinet of Louis the Sixteenth, he was the principal agent in all the transactions between France and the United States during the war. To him more than to any other individual, perhaps more than to all others, the Americans were indebted for the countenance and aid they received from abroad. From the first to the last hour of the contest, he was their friend, as far as friendship could be manifested by a steady adherence to their cause and unremitted efforts to attain its success. The writer of the Paris letter, and others, distrust his sincerity, and accuse him of showing an open face to the Americans, while he was secretly plotting schemes to their disadvantage and at variance with his professions. This point will also be examined as we proceed.

Although the reasons which induced France to make war upon England at that time are not immediately connected with the question under consideration, yet, as throwing light on the subject, some of these reasons, as stated by the French, may properly be mentioned. In the year 1763, at the close of what in America has been known as the *Old French War*, a treaty of peace was signed between England and France. From a combination of unforeseen causes, the war turned out to be most disastrous to the French. After fighting seven years, their marine was reduced almost to insignificance, compared with that of England, they having lost thirty-three ships of the line and seventy-four frigates, besides a vast number of merchant vessels. Canada had been taken from France, and islands in all parts of the world: her funds were exhausted; her credit gone; and the nation was discouraged. In this condition, peace was necessary.

The experience of all ages has shown that no treaty can endure in which one party takes advantage of the necessities of another to impose degrading terms or insist on humiliating concessions. There is a sense of honor, a self-respect, in nations as well as individuals, which, though they may yield to temporary force, will submit no longer than till the aggrieved party acquires strength to throw off the burden and recover its lost dignity—a dignity inherent in the nature of every man, and in the spirit of every political association. Intoxicated with her successes, England forgot this principle of human nature. She forgot the lessons inscribed on every page of her history, and thought only of humbling her rival, not merely by weakening her power and diminishing the resources of that rival, but by bringing her honor and national spirit under reproach in the eye of the world. England demanded Canada and the islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, thereby cutting off a large part of the French fisheries; she demanded a sacrifice of territories and long-established sources of trade in the West Indies, Africa, and the East Indies; and she obtained all her demands. After the treaty, she attempted to impose restrictions on the French navy, and prevent its increase. It was the purpose of England, not so much to indemnify herself for the expenses and losses of the war, as to reduce her rival to a state of weakness and humiliation from which she should not soon recover. Hence she left a deep wound to rankle in the breast of every Frenchman; and hence, likewise, no Frenchman that was true to his country, or true to himself, could be expected patiently to submit to these ignominious terms any longer than the necessity should exist by which they had been imposed.

There was a heavy charge against England, also, in regard to the first operations of the war, which France could never forget. Before the declaration of war, and while constant assurances of a pacific disposition were made to the French Ambassador in London, secret orders were sent by the British Government to their cruisers in various parts of the world to seize French vessels and bring them into English ports. A fleet was likewise secretly dispatched to intercept a French squadron on its way to Canada; and two ships of the line were actually captured near Newfoundland, with a regiment of troops on board, and brought to England. In short, before the declaration of war on either side, the English had seized upwards of three hundred French merchant ships, and made prisoners of nearly ten thousand seamen; while, in the mean time, the French Government, as they affirmed, confiding in the protestations of the British Ministers that they intended to preserve the peace unimpaired, had made no preparations for naval warfare, nor even given notice to their merchants that hostilities at sea were to be apprehended.

Whatever apology there may be for these acts of aggression in the deep mysteries of political expediency, the French always regarded them as an unprovoked and wanton violation of national faith. Their trade had been crippled; many of their merchants ruined; their navy essentially weakened by the capture of so large a body of seamen; and they ascribed their ill success in the war, and the humiliating treaty that followed, in a great measure, to these acts of hostility, committed under the mask of peace and pretended friendship.

Such was the state of feeling in France towards England, and such its causes, when the war of independence began in America. It would naturally be expected that the contest, if it were only a family quarrel between England and her descendants in the new world, would be regarded with satisfaction by the French Court and the French People; for, however it might end, it could not be carried on without great loss of resources to England, and such loss would be a relative gain to France. Nor is it surprising that it should enter the heads and hearts of Frenchmen to inquire whether an opportunity did not now present itself of a just retaliation upon the ancient rival of France, who had treated her so ill in the hour of her necessities, and against whom she had laid up such grave matter of recrimination and reproach for some future day of reckoning.

It has been affirmed with emphasis, by some writers, that, before the war began, and during the troubles occasioned by the stamp act and the commercial restrictions that followed, the French Court busied itself in stirring up the spirit of revolt in America by its secret emissaries and promises of assistance. But much more has been said on this subject than any known or probable facts will warrant. Flassan, who had access to the archives, doubts the existence of any such designs. He says that Maurepas and Vergennes, after they came into the Ministry under Louis the Sixteenth, caused a search to be made in the offices, and that no proof was found. It is, nevertheless, true that an agent was sent to America in 1768, by Choiseul, at that time the principal Minister. This agent was the Baron de Kalb, then an officer in the French army, and afterwards distinguished for his military services in America. He was probably selected for this mission because he was a German, and would thus be less likely to be suspected as coming from France. He also understood the English language. He was instructed to make inquiries concerning the state of things in the colonies, and report to the Minister. It does not appear that he was authorized to let the object of his mission be known to any individual. It was merely a tour of observation. He was four months in the country, visiting the principal places from Philadelphia to Halifax. His instructions and correspondence are now before me, and the following extract from a letter to the Minister, dated August 6, 1768, will show what impressions he had received:

"This country," says the Baron de Kalb, "will, in time, not only throw off its dependence upon Great Britain, but will at length invade all the possessions held by the European Powers in America, as well the islands as the main land. There is every reason for believing that a conformity of laws, usages, language, and religion will for some time prevent the colonies (unless compelled to act in self-defence) from rising against the mother country, otherwise than by refusing to take merchandise of English manufacture, and by establishing manufactures of their own. And, even in this case, they would not accept succors from a foreign Power, which would only arouse their suspicion and alarm them for their liberty, especially if these succors were to come from France. They would prefer submission, for a time at least, to the Parliament of England. Moreover, if the colonies will unite among themselves, their combined force will be sufficient for their mutual defence. An English army, however strong, could do no more than ravage or plunder the maritime towns, or, at most, a few provinces, but could never subdue or keep them in subjection. The extent of the country, without much effort on the part of the inhabitants, is an obstacle to such an enterprise which could not be overcome. I can never persuade myself, therefore, that the Government of Great Britain so little understands its true interest as to proceed to extremities with the colonies. I believe, on the contrary, that all the dissensions will terminate to the entire satisfaction of the latter."

Such is the tenor of the communications made by this agent, and, if the Minister entertained any design of interference, these communications certainly were not such as to flatter his hopes. Choiseul soon afterwards retired from the Ministry, and no proof has been adduced that any other emissary was ever sent to America by the French Court before the war broke out. There is strong presumptive evidence to the contrary.

But when the colonists had been driven to take up arms, and hostilities had actually begun, the controversy put on a new aspect, which could not fail to awaken the attention of France and revive the reminiscence of her alleged grievances. It soon gave rise to discussions in the Cabinet. At the very outset, there was a strong party for the war, on the ground of the old complaints and of some recent exhibitions of the naval power of England infringing the maritime rights of France. Count Vergennes was at the head of this party. He urged the expediency, justice, and fitness of the occasion for a war against a nation who had inflicted manifold wrongs upon France, and whose haughty bearing on the ocean was constantly impelling her to new encroachments. Another party was opposed to a war as premature. The country was not prepared for it. Time was necessary to recruit the finances and increase the navy. The King was of this party, and he yielded at last to the war party with extreme reluctance. Notwithstanding this difference, however, there seems to have been but one opinion as to the expediency of sending secret aid to the Americans. Even the high-minded Turgot, who opposed a war, advised this course. In his view it was the interest and policy of France to foment the quarrel between England and her colonies, and leave them to worry and exhaust each other as much as they might, thus reducing the power of England, and making her less formidable to France whenever the time should come for a war.

By what law of nations could this be done, while a treaty of peace existed between France and England? It would be difficult to find such a law in any treatise or recognised code. The French politicians justify themselves by the usage of nations, and particularly by the example of England. On several occasions, in times of civil commotions in France, she had tampered with the inhabitants of the towns and provinces along the coast, encouraging and assisting them to rise against the Government. She had received deputies from the rebellious Huguenots of Rochefort, and sent aid to sustain the revolt of the Camisards of the Civennes. In the renowned revolution of the Netherlands, Queen Elizabeth had sent them large succors, and continually supported their cause, while they were in a state of revolt from their rightful sovereign the King of Spain, although she was bound by a league of friendship to this same sovereign. And, in very recent times, the English had clandestinely furnished supplies to the Corsicans in aid of their noble efforts, under the brave, the patriotic, and enlightened Paoli, to break the chains by which they were held in servitude to a stronger Power, and to establish themselves as an independent people. Indeed, there was no want of precedents in almost all countries and times, and the policy of France certainly was not scrupulous in returning upon England the measure which she had often rendered to others.

Such was the course pursued by France till the Declaration of Independence. Immediately after the news of that event arrived, Count de Vergennes made a new effort to bring over the King and the Cabinet to his views. For this purpose, on the 31st of August, 1776, he read a memoir to the King in council. After enumerating, at considerable length, the reasons for war, he goes on to say:

"If the question consisted in balancing the advantages and conveniences of a war against England at the present conjuncture, it would be easy to demonstrate that the former preponderate so much over the latter as to leave no room for a comparison. Indeed, what more fortunate moment could France choose for effacing the disgrace of the treacherous surprise which was made upon her in 1755, and of all the disasters which followed it, than that in which England, engaged in a civil war a thousand leagues from her metropolis, has scattered the forces necessary for the defence of her own shores?

"Since the measure adopted by the United Colonies in declaring their independence, there is little prospect of a reconciliation, unless events, that may be regarded as supernatural, shall change the face of things, and compel the Americans to submit to the yoke which they are striving to throw off, or the English to recognise the independence against which they are in arms.

"The connexion which would be formed between France and North America, by uniting in a war against England, would not be one of those transient ties which are created by the necessities of the moment and then are dissolved. No conflicting interests could divide two nations who communicate with each other across a vast ocean. Their commercial relations, mutually advantageous, would bind them together with a chain, which, if not eternal, would at least be of very long duration; and they would infuse new life into the industry of France, and gather into her ports the valuable products of America, which have heretofore centered in England, and which, by animating the industry of that nation, have contributed so much to elevate her to that extraordinary degree of wealth to which she has attained. Such a tie would have for France the double advantage of augmenting the national industry by diminishing that of her powerful rival."

In this paragraph we see the entire policy of France in her union with the United States; the weakening of England by severing from her so important a part of the empire, and the hope of profiting afterwards by the commerce of the American States. Count Vergennes's arguments, however, fell upon the ears of his auditors without carrying conviction. Neither the King nor a majority of the Council was ready to take the decisive step he desired.

But the time at length came when the scruples of the hesitating members were removed. The capture of Burgoyne and the good conduct of Washington's army in combating the British forces in Pennsylvania, produced a deep impression in Europe. The Americans had now sustained themselves nobly, and gained important advantages in three campaigns, and had given as strong a pledge as could possibly be required for their future constancy to themselves and to the cause in which they had embarked. On this point the French Cabinet had all along been doubtful and suspicious. They feared that the Americans, embarrassed if not discouraged by their difficulties, would sooner or later yield to the force of old habits or attachments, and seek, or at least accept, a reconciliation with the mother country. This was the main reason, added to the obstacles thrown in the way by the opponents to the war, why they did not at an earlier day enter into a treaty of alliance with the United States. If they had been premature in this step, and, after a union was formed, if the Americans had returned to their allegiance to the British King, the French would have been left in a very awkward situation, with a war on their hands against England, and the ridicule of the world upon them for having recognised the independence and taken up the cause of the insurgent colonists, who had neither the will, the resolution, nor the internal force to maintain the position they had assumed. It was not strange that prudence should counsel caution in venturing upon an experiment the issue of which was so uncertain. When they first talked of war, it does not appear to have entered into their plan to join in an alliance with the Americans, but only to seize upon the occasion of their revolt as a favorable opportunity to assail and weaken England.

When Franklin, Deane, and Lee were appointed Commissioners from Congress, they were furnished with the draught of a treaty of commerce, which they were instructed to propose to the French Court. Nearly a year passed before the King was ready to listen to any such proposal; but, when the time came, it was met with a frankness not usual in negotiations of this kind. At the first interview on this subject between Count Vergennes and the Commissioners, he said "it was the resolution of the 'King to take no advantage of the situation of the 'Americans, and to desire no terms which they 'might afterwards repent of and endeavor to retract." The treaty was conducted, therefore, in strict conformity to this declaration. Every article is adjusted in the nicest scale of reciprocity. Whatever is granted by either party has its exact equivalent from the other, as far as it could be decided by the wisdom of the negotiators.

It was presumed that this treaty, when it should be known, would bring on a war between France and England; and the treaty of alliance, which followed, was designed to explain the duties of the two contracting parties in prosecuting the war, and to bind them mutually to certain conditions. They were to make the war a common cause, and to aid each other as becomes good and faithful allies. It was declared to be "the essential and direct end of 'the alliance to maintain effectually the liberty, 'sovereignty, and independence, absolute and unlimited, of the United States." The contracting parties agreed that neither of them should conclude either a truce or peace with Great Britain without the consent of the other first obtained; and they mutually agreed not to lay down their arms until the independence of the United States should be secured by a treaty at the end of the war.

This treaty of alliance is founded on as exact principles of reciprocity as the nature of the subject would admit. France makes no provision for obtaining possessions on the American continent, either by conquest or cession, not even Canada and the islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which had been taken from her, as she thought by no fair means, in the last war. She claimed no aid from the United States towards any conquest whatever: on the contrary, she early disavowed, in the most explicit manner, all intentions of making conquests or accepting cessions of territory on the continent; and it may be added that her conduct during the war was in perfect accordance with this disavowal. The French Court maintained the lawfulness of recognising the independence of the United States, and of entering into a treaty with them. In a memoir read by M. de Vergennes to the King in Council, on the 7th of January, 1778, while the treaty was in progress, he speaks as follows:

"The United States are independent in fact, (*dans le fait independans.*) They are in all respects a sovereign Power. Our recognition will add nothing to the reality of this possession. We introduce no positive articles on this head, but treat with States which possess the sovereign power, for the purpose of turning the exercise of it to the advantage of our own people, after the example of Princes of all ages and countries, who have treated with the usurpers of more than one throne, without pretending to erect themselves into judges of the validity of their titles."

This doctrine, if it was ever doubtful, has been sustained in recent times, even by England herself, in recognising the independence and sovereignty of the South American Republics before they were acknowledged by Spain.

There is no doubt that the demonstrations of Lord North in the British Parliament, preparatory to his new conciliatory bills, added a spur to the apparent eagerness of France at this moment to enter into a treaty with the Americans. It is evident, from several passages in Count de Vergennes's letters to the Ambassador in Spain, that the French Court had very serious fears that Congress would listen to the tempting proposals which the British Government might now be induced to hold out, and thus the opportunity of producing a permanent separation would be lost. It is also evident that the American Commissioners had adroitness enough to foster these apprehensions and turn them to the good account of hastening the treaty. M. de Vergennes talks of their coldness and indifference, and of the secret emissaries from England hovering about Dr. Franklin. All these symptoms were ominous, as he thought, of subdued resolutions on the part of the British Ministry, and of a possible change in the temper and spirit of the Americans.

The family compact existing between France and Spain bound them to act in concert in important measures, or, at all events, it exacted the courtesy of a previous explanation from the party about to engage in such measures. On the present occasion, therefore, at the beginning of the negotiation, M. de Vergennes wrote an elaborate despatch to the Spanish Court, urging its co-operation in the treaties with the United States, with a full exposition of the reasons which influenced the Court of France, and which it was believed should be equally conclusive with Spain. This despatch was answered by Count de Florida Blanca, the Spanish Prime Minister, who endeavored to confute the reasons, showing the step to be premature and at variance with the interests of both countries. Several letters passed in quick succession while the negotiation was pending, chiefly through the channel of M. de Montmorin, the French Ambassador in Spain. The solicitations and arguments of the French Court were unavailing. Charles the Third refused to join in the treaties, but left the King of France free to act without his concurrence.

Apprehensive of this result, or anticipating delay, the Court of France resolved from the beginning to sign the treaties with the American Commissioners, and provide by a separate article for the accession of Spain, whenever that tardy Court should be ready to join the alliance. Florida Blanca was piqued at this haste and apparent want of deference to his counsels, and it required no little address in the French Minister to soothe and pacify his discontent. It is worthy of remark that Count d'Aranda, the Spanish Ambassador in Paris, differed entirely from his Court, and filled his despatches with ardent recommendations of immediate war, which Florida Blanca ascribed to the contagious atmosphere he breathed in the vicinity of Versailles.

To judge of the different spirit which animated these two Courts, we need recur only to one or two points in the correspondence of the principal Ministers. We have seen that France exacted nothing from the United States, except a pledge that they would not lay down their arms till their independence should be confirmed by a treaty at the end of the war; no heavy demand, since it was the very object for which the United States were contending. On the other hand, the Spanish Minister would first stipulate for "the advantages which 'Spain was to derive from the alliance, and the 'compensation she would receive for the expenses 'or losses she might incur in sustaining it," and how far the co-operation of the United States might be depended on for carrying out the general plan of the war in favor of the allied Powers. To these points M. de Vergennes replied:

"France does not expect to derive from the treaty of commerce any advantage which will not be common to all commercial nations. There is not a word implying an exclusive privilege; the whole is constructed in the spirit of perfect equity, and for the most extensive benefits.

"Spain can stipulate for such conditions as she may deem suitable to her situation and interest. We have not thought it advisable, on our part, to demand an indemnity for the expenses which our engagements may occasion, because it has never been customary with France to ask for such an indemnity; and, moreover, according to the tenor which it has been necessary to give to the treaties, the Americans will rather be the auxiliaries of France than France of the Americans. Spain may have different principles in this respect, but, if she will consider the extreme difference to her of having the Americans for neighbors along the borders of her immense possessions—a tranquil people, who, even by their constitution, it would seem, can never become ambitious or fond of conquest—rather than the English, inveterate enemies, who are always occupied, in peace and war, in extending their usurpations, she will doubtless perceive that, by embracing the opportunity now afforded of substituting a peaceable for a troublesome neighborhood, she will practise a real economy, and obtain the greatest advantage which she could promise herself."

Extracts from this correspondence might be multiplied, all tending to the same result, showing the object and design of France in her alliance with the United States, and the honorable terms in which the treaties were proffered and executed. In reality, France made but one pledge to the United States, which was to prosecute the war till their independence and sovereignty should be firmly established. This pledge certainly implied many others relative to the manner of carrying on the war, the extent and kind of aid to be rendered, and a friendly interposition with other foreign Powers in favor of this independence. Since no stipulations for indemnity, remuneration, or exclusive privileges were exacted from the United States, they had no right to demand or expect exorbitant sacrifices in their behalf; but they had a right to expect sincerity and fair dealing from their allies, a steady support of their cause, and a faithful adherence to promises.

In another paper I shall consider some of these topics, and show the grounds of my conviction that the delinquencies charged upon France in regard to them are contrary to indisputable evidence. S.

THE "ANNEXATION."

A LETTER FROM GEN. SAM. HOUSTON.

HUNTSVILLE, (TEXAS,) JULY 18, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR: Within a few days I have seen a letter in the Weekly Union of the 12th ultimo, over the signature of Ex-President TYLER. If it were not for some facts stated in the letter, demanding, as I conceive, some notice from me, I would not trouble you with this communication; or, if the facts stated were not material to the truth of history and the character of those who at the time were the chief functionaries of the Texan Government, I should feel it less incumbent on myself to solicit some explanation of the facts alleged. The statements, emanating from so high and respectable a source, are well calculated to enforce them upon the minds of readers as authentic, and not as matters arising from the misapprehension of truth.

The Ex-President, when stating the reasons which induced him to propose the subject of annexation to Texas, amongst others says:

"Nor was it until I received *authentic* information that other nations were exerting all their efforts to induce a course of action on the part of Texas at war, as I firmly believed, with the permanent interests of the United States, that I gave directions to my lamented friend, Abel P. Upshur, then Secretary of State, to break up and scatter to the winds the web of their intrigues by a direct proposal for annexation."

It seems, from this position assumed by Mr. TYLER, that he either imagined the authorities of Texas were favorable to those intrigues, and were willing to compromise her rights and interests as a nation, or that they could not perceive the force and effect of the *web which was weaving around her destiny!* Now either inference would do injustice to her character. The authorities of Texas had relied for years upon a plain and frank proposition for annexation, and had hoped to be met by a cordial and manly acceptance. They were disappointed. Texas was treated with coldness, reserve, or palpable discouragement. In this condition of our affairs, common sense, without uncommon sagacity, suggested the only feasible plan to attain the desired object; and that was, to excite jealousy and alarm on the part of the politicians and people of the United States in relation to the future commercial and political connexions of Texas with European nations. This was easily accomplished, by treating with silence all the charges which were made by editors of various newspapers in the United States.

The Chief Magistrate of Texas was charged with "treason"—selling Texas to England—subsidizing her to France! and in a short time "astounding disclosures" of all these transactions would take place! All these charges remained uncontradicted by the journals of Texas, and the effect was all that could be desired. Jealousy towards England and France was awakened. This begat excitement, which originated phantasies and conjured up notions of intrigues which had existence only in imagination.

The facts, as well as the diplomatic correspondence of Texas in all these matters, will vindicate those engaged in the administration of the Government, as well as the representatives of foreign nations.

Mr. Tyler further says, in reference to the measure of annexation:

"Nay, I may go even further, and declare, before the initiative was taken, and when the preliminaries were nearly all arranged, their completion being alone prevented by the death of Mr. Upshur, and the appointment of an adjunct commissioner to Mr. Van Zandt by Texas," &c.

From this it might readily be inferred that obstacles had been interposed to a conclusion of the preliminaries, by the appointment of an adjunct commissioner by Texas. No steps were authorized to be taken by any agent on the subject of the proposition. Previous to the proposition by Mr. Upshur, through Mr. Murphy, United States Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Van Zandt had been instructed to make known to the Government of the United States *that the proposition for annexation was no longer open to discussion!* This, no doubt, in connexion with the proclamation of an armistice between Texas and Mexico, corroborated by the *authentic* information referred to by Mr. Tyler, caused the direct proposition to be made for annexation.

In December, 1841, the Executive of Texas found the country surrounded by and involved in the most intricate and perilous difficulties. To redeem the nation, it was necessary to accomplish one of three objects, and he designed his plans accordingly. His first object was to obtain annexation; if in that he did not succeed, his next was to secure the independence of Texas by the recognition of Mexico; and, if he should fail in these, the third was to form a treaty with some Power defensive against Mexico. In advancing his policy, his first movement was to send a Minister (Mr. Reilly) to the United States, with instructions to present to the Government at Washington the subject of annexation, which had lain dormant for three years immediately preceding that period. These instructions were carried out in the best manner by Mr. Reilly, but met by discouragement on the part of the Government of the United States. In 1842 Mr. Reilly resigned, and Mr. Van Zandt was sent on in his stead, when the proposition for annexation was renewed. The renewal of the proposition was heard, and met with habitual apathy! About this time the causes which I have alluded to began to operate, while there were means used which infused into them new life. The success of the measure of annexation depended upon the internal political condition of the United States, and not upon any intrigues of foreign Powers or of Texas.

The Executive of Texas was not moved by the "direct proposition for annexation," but by the pledges given to him by Mr. Murphy, Chargé d'Affaires of the United States. Before an adjunct commissioner was appointed by the President pledges were demanded by him of Mr. Murphy, based upon Mr. Upshur's letter, that a military and naval force of the United States, sufficient for the defence of Texas, should be placed at the disposition of the President, and held subject to his orders. This was as far as Mr. Murphy felt authorized to go in the matter. Upon this, the Executive of Texas waived other demands, which were, that, in the event of a failure on the part of the Government of the United States to consummate annexation, after negotiations were once opened between the two Governments, she should be bound to guaranty the independence of Texas, or enter into a treaty defensive against Mexico. These demands were waived for the present, with the assurance that previous to opening negotiations at Washington city these pledges should be given to Texas, through her commissioners, or the matter was to rest; as nothing less than a perfect guaranty for the security of Texas would be satisfactory to the President.

In November, 1842, the United States, England, and France had all been invoked by Texas, and requested to act, jointly or severally, in producing peace between Texas and Mexico. Texas found these Powers all equally well disposed to leave her to her fate, rather than risk any thing in her behalf. On the part of Texas this looked like fair dealing, though she were not dealt fairly with by others. This certainly left no *web of intrigue to scatter to the winds.*

The object of all men should be to reprehend in others what is wrong in itself; or, in truth, to rebuke whatever deserves rebuke; but to charge either nations or individuals with faults or crimes which do not exist, because it is palatable to a morbid taste which may prevail for a time, is not suited to the intelligence of the age.

It affords me pleasure (so far as I was connected with the transactions of that day) to assert that I was delighted when Mr. Tyler took the official "initiative" in the measure of annexation. I thought his bold and manly course, in assuming a just and proper responsibility, was such as should characterize the head of a great nation.

Accusations have been so frequently made against the authorities of Texas *indirectly*, and against the representatives of foreign Governments *directly*, that I have felt myself imperatively called upon to avow to all who feel an interest in learning or embracing the truth in regard to this matter, that there never was any intrigue connected with Texas and other Powers, nor was there ever any foundation for such a charge (though often reiterated) only in the feverish excitement of heated fancy, or the mischievous designs of the wicked.

I feel constrained to say thus much in vindication of myself and friends, who were actors with me, and who sustained me through the period alluded to, as well as the representatives of other Governments who rendered us kindnesses, without ever proposing aught which could embarrass or degrade Texas in the day of her veriest tribulation.

So much has been said in relation to annexation—the policy of the measure—the causes which produced it—those who brought it about, and those who effected the great result, that I shall indulge in but one reflection, as I hope it may not be necessary for me ever to say more on the subject.

Taking into view the genius of the Texans and the people of the United States, their identity of character, and the proximity of the two nations, it was most natural that they should become united. For years neither political party of the United States was willing to rely upon the measure for political capital. Texas had been urgent in her importunities for annexation, but they were disregarded. Gen. Jackson's letters brought the subject before the American people. They took it up as a people's measure, not presented to them by politicians, for it was of too great magnitude to be wielded by any thing less than the masses of the two nations. In their action the people gave a happy illustration of the genius of our institutions, and of the omnipotence of their voice in important matters touching the public weal. Gen Jackson's influence, arising from his wisdom and fervid patriotism, led the way, and gave more direction to the measure, and to American feeling, than all other men. Others followed where he led. The subject was of such grand import to the United States, that, like Aaron's rod, it swallowed the rods of all political sorcerers; and while it advanced the prospects of many able men on one hand who supported it, on the other, like a destroying angel, it carried destruction on its wings. It unmade and made the great men of America. It fixed the great seal to Jackson's achievements.

I am, truly, your fellow-citizen and friend,

SAM. HOUSTON.

To Col. F. L. HATCH, Editor of the Texas Banner.

THE EFFECTS OF ETHER ON VEGETABLES.—An account is given in the London Athenæum of some curious experiments recently made by M. Clemens, Professor of National Sciences in the College of Vevay, Switzerland. The Professor's object was to test the effects of ether on vegetable life and sensitiveness. The results of his experiments he has communicated in a memorial to the Academy of Sciences of the Canton of Vaud, and these go to prove that vegetables are as susceptible to the effects of ether as are animals. The Professor says:

"Take a branch of the common barberry and put it under a drinking glass with a small quantity of ether for a minute at most if in the sun, and three minutes at most if in the shade, but at a temperature of not less than 59° of Fahrenheit, and when it is withdrawn it will be found, on touching the stamina at their base, that they have lost all their irritability, which will not return in the first instance until after a considerable time, the influence of the ether having been much stronger. In the second case, on the contrary, the primitive irritability is recovered in half an hour. The plant may be etherized a second time, and this second etherization must not be any longer than the first, and after half an hour the plant resumes all its vigor. To etherize a sensitive plant (mimosa pudica) the process must be continued for eight or ten minutes, and a proportionably longer time in the shade. The acetic chlorhydric and nitric ethers act in the same manner, but the sulphuric and acetic ethers are the most effective."

TALIACOTIUS OUTDONE.—The Birmingham Journal relates that recently a fight took place between some workmen who were drinking in a public house at Bilston, and one of them had his nose bitten off. He was taken immediately to a surgeon, and the wounded parts were dressed to the satisfaction of all present. The sufferer, however, on returning home, began to reflect on the unpicturesque effect which a countenance bereft of the nasal appendage would produce. On a consultation with his friends, the idea occurred to them that possibly the lopped feature might be restored to its original post of honor. Accordingly, they returned to the scene of action, and, after searching for nearly an hour, they at length discovered the object of their desire lying in a dark corner of the room, begrimed with dirt. Having secured their prize, they set off to a surgeon of the town, to whom they stated the case, and who very carefully united the parts together, and in a manner which completely restored the main element of facial beauty to its former shape and position; and a happy union of parts having ensued, the young man appears little the worse for his singular misfortune.—*London paper.*

THE PLANETS are in an interesting position at present. Venus is at about her greatest brilliancy, and in figure like the moon of three or four days old. This phase may be seen with a moderately good spyglass, and the more easily if observed half an hour before sunset, when her brightness will be so modified by the remaining daylight as not to interfere with distinctness of vision. She will be found in the southwest.

Saturn is in the southeast at 9 o'clock, the most conspicuous of the stars there visible. His ring is gradually closing, and so much diminished in breadth this year that he looks, to a moderate telescopic power, like a ball with a short thick ruler stuck through the middle of it. During the next year the ring will become invisible for awhile, except to gigantic telescopic power.

Mars is increasing greatly in apparent size. He rises about ten o'clock, and is too red and brilliant to be mistaken. His brightness already exceeds that of Jupiter; at least, we could retain him longer than Jupiter (almost until after sunrise) in view of the naked eye yesterday morning. As he rises earlier every evening, and will increase in size for some weeks, he will be an interesting object during the whole autumn.

Jupiter does not yet rise early enough in the night to be seen of many. But the possessors of good spyglasses may find Uranus near zeta Piscium, and Neptune (Leverrier) near iota Aquarii. As to the *last* new planet, unless the telescope can see the companion of the Pole Star very distinctly it cannot see it at all. But Venus is worth looking at, and will not be so easily seen after the next eight or ten days.

[*New York Gazette.*

BREAKFAST ON THE EUROPEAN PLAN.—A lady up town advertises in a morning paper to "accommodate gentlemen with breakfast on the European plan." Our uppish inhabitants are very partial to doing things in the European fashion, but we doubt whether they would relish a breakfast on any of the European plans now in vogue. To a gentleman at all particular in his breakfasts, it would be of some moment to know what part of Europe the lady intends to imitate. In England they breakfast on toast and black tea; in Scotland nothing will serve for breakfast but oat meal porridge; it is not safe to say what they breakfast on in Ireland, just now, but we fear that many a family have to be content with the "chamelion's dish." In France we have often seen them breakfasting on a loaf of dry bread and a bottle of thin wine; in Spain a cup of chocolate and a bit of garlic suffices for the better orders, while the Germans make a morning meal of sour bread and sour beer. Of the other parts of Europe we have no personal knowledge, but having breakfasted on many plans, we say commend us, after all, to the American plan. Basil Hall said it was worth crossing the Atlantic to eat an American breakfast, in which opinion we heartily concur, and would advise all ladies who wish to secure boarders not to think of giving breakfasts on any European plan whatever. But, if they will adopt the European plan, let them advertise the particular part of Europe which they mean to imitate. There must be considerable difference between the breakfasts of Dublin and St. Petersburgh.—*New York Mirror.*

"Give me," says a recent vigorous writer, "the money that has been spent in war, and I will purchase every foot of land upon the globe. I will clothe every man, woman, and child in an attire that kings and queens would be proud of. I will build a school-house upon every hill side and in every valley over the whole habitable earth; I will supply that school-house with a competent teacher; I will build an academy in every town, and endow it; a college in every State, and fill it with able professors; I will crown every hill with a church consecrated to the promulgation of the gospel of peace; I will support in its pulpit an able teacher of righteousness, so that on every Sabbath morning the chime on one hill should answer to the chime on another around the earth's broad circumference, and the voice of prayer and the song of praise should ascend like a universal holocaust to Heaven."

THE COUNTRYMAN AND CLAM SOUP.—The Trenton State Gazette says that a few days ago, just before dinner, a hungry looking man entered the refectory of Mr. Warner, in that city, and pronounced the usual interrogatory—

"Is this the place where they keep clam soup?"

"Yes, sir, (said Mr. Warner,) how much will you have?"

"Well, (replied the customer,) I guess I'll take three cents' worth."

"Three cents' worth! (exclaimed the astonished host;) why, man alive, where are you going to put three cents' worth? You certainly won't pretend to eat that quantity at one time?"

"How do you sell it?" asked the astonished countryman.

"One cent a gallon."

"Well, I'll try a gallon," said the countryman, as he leisurely took a seat in one of the boxes.

Mr. Warner, who felt in the humor for a joke, measured out a gallon of clam soup, and had it carried to the customer. He commenced devouring it, and after several temporary suspensions, in order to wipe away the perspiration and breathe freer, he at length found the bottom of his soup dish. Mr. W. inquired of the customer whether he didn't want more?

He replied in the negative, and inquired of Mr. Warner "How in the world do you manage to make soup so cheap?"

"Why, (said Mr. Warner,) in the spring we buy about a hundred clams, put them in a hogshead of water, and, by occasionally throwing in a few crackers and sufficient pepper and salt, in a few weeks have the soup ready for use, and can keep it the whole year round."

"Well, now! aint that fust rate! What do you ask for the receipt?"

"For a county-right I ask $50, $30 for a township, and $3 for a family-right."

"That'll just suit us, for we don't get clams whar I live more than once a year. The next time I come down I guess I'll buy a family right. I'm desperate fond of clam soup myself!"